

## **The First 50 Women in Idaho Law**

### **JOSEPHINE PICKFORD BEEMAN**

**September 30, 1975**



**Josephine Pickford Beeman** was born in 1947, a fifth generation native to Fresno, California, one of four daughters and has an identical twin. Beeman and her twin sister were co-valedictorians of their high school graduating class in 1965.

Beeman excelled in school, receiving her undergraduate degree in biology from Stanford University in 1969 and her Masters degree in biology from the University of Oregon in 1970. Then, while working on her doctorate in biology, she felt that she needed to get out of the laboratory to get the type of job she had always been drawn to – one with greater opportunities to shape broad policies. Beeman decided to go to law school, receiving her Juris Doctorate from the University of Oregon in 1975. Notably, Beeman entered law school in the fall of 1972, just a few months after the Watergate scandal became public, making for a memorable first-year constitutional law class. The politics of the time also made for a memorable wedding date – the day after President Richard Nixon resigned – to her first husband Kelly Beeman.

Beeman came to Idaho immediately after graduating from law school with her husband. Only eight women took the Idaho Bar examination with her in 1975, and Beeman was admitted with four of them on September 30, 1975. Although Beeman says she never really found it difficult to practice at a time when few women chose law as a career, she does recall an early hearing in Salmon, Idaho, where she appeared with a male expert witness, and the judge assumed they were there to be married.

In her thirty years of practice, Beeman has successfully integrated her science background into her legal practice by specializing in water law. After a short stint at Boise Cascade, Beeman became the first attorney at the Idaho Department of Water Resources in 1976, where she worked for fourteen years. She went into private practice in 1990 and eventually formed her own law firm in Boise in 1997. Her present law firm, Beeman and Associates, takes on some of the most demanding water rights adjudications. Her professional work includes a United States Supreme Court case affecting title to 11 million acres of land in the West and numerous appellate cases on water law in Idaho. Blending her technical background with her legal expertise, Beeman is, as former Idaho Supreme Court Justice Robert Bakes describes her, “an accomplished water lawyer.”

Beeman is married to Michael Gilmore, also an attorney, and has four wonderful daughters, Kimberly, Katherine, Hillary and Laura. Kimberly’s college graduation in 2001 marked the fifth generation of women college graduates in Beeman’s family.